Research Notes: Margaret Mitchell Spellman/Spaulding

(1821 - 1893)

Research Overview:

Margaret Mitchell is not a direct ancestor, but she occupies a central position in the family record as the stepmother of Ellen Spaulding Clarke Sheppard and the organizing figure in the lives of Patrick Spollen's surviving children after his death. Her significance lies not in her origin alone, which remains uncertain, but in the choices she made as a widow and the lasting effects of those choices on the family's structure, surname, and geographic settlement. Margaret appears repeatedly at moments of transition—widowhood, relocation, and remarriage of her children—while the record remains largely silent about her early life and first years in the United States**.**

Margaret married Patrick Spollen in 1850, shortly after he arrived in Massachusetts with two young children from a prior marriage. Evidence of a surname change appears only after Patrick's death. In the 1869 Boston City Directory, two entries—Ellen Spellman and Ellen Spaulding—are listed at the same address. Patrick never used Spaulding as a surname. Its adoption occurred after his death and appears to have been Margaret's decision. The children who later settled in Clinton, Iowa, consistently used the Spaulding name.

After Patrick's death, Margaret's surviving children ultimately moved from Boston to Clinton, Iowa. Ellen, born in Ireland, lived in Boston, married John Clarke, spent a short period in California during the Gold Rush era, and then settled in Clinton. Thomas and Mary, both born in Massachusetts, also moved to Clinton as young adults, they married, raised families, and died. Margaret herself follows, showing that the move from Boston involved most of the immediate family. The record does not explain why the family left Boston or why they resettled together in Clinton.

One child does not follow this pattern**.** W. Michael Spellman, born in Ireland, appears with Margaret and his siblings in Boston after Patrick's death and is listed in the 1865 Massachusetts State Census as a nineteen-year-old harness maker. After that point, he disappears from the record. No later

documentation has been found for him under either the Spellman or Spaulding surname. His absence stands in contrast to the documented lives of his siblings, all of whom later appear in Clinton, Iowa.

Speculative Narrative:

Intentionally left blank

Time Line:

10 May 1821 - Birth, possibly in County Roscommon, Ireland.

1850 - Marriage to Patrick Spellman (1820 - 1857)

No Massachusetts marriage record located; marriage may have occurred in a Gretna Green location**.**

12 Jul 1851 - Birth of son Thomas Henry Spellman (1851 - 1931) at Haverhill, Essex, Massachusetts. [1]

3 Feb 1853 - Birth of daughter Mary E Spellman (1853 - 1899) at Haverhill, Essex, Massachusetts. [2]

1855 - Massachusetts State Census at Haverhill, Essex, Massachusetts. [3]

Patrick Spelman, 34

Margarette Spelman, 34

Ellen Spelman, 12

Michael Spellman, 10

Thomas Spelman, 4

Mary Spellman, 2

[1]

[2] "Massachusetts, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1626-2001", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q29G-KG9Y: Thu Mar 07 21:31:12 UTC 2024), Entry for Thomas Spelman and Patrick, 12 July 1851

[3] "Massachusetts State Census, 1855", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MQ4T-4WY: Sat Mar 09 10:35:38 UTC 2024), Entry for Patrick Spelman and Margerette Spelman, 1855.

16 Jul 1857 - Death of husband Patrick Spellman (1820 - 1857) at Haverhill, Essex, Massachusetts.[4]

1860 - US Census at Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts.[5]

Margaret Spaulding, 40

Thomas Spaulding, 9

Ellen Spaulding, 16

Mary Spaulding, 7

Surname usage shifts between Spaulding and Spellman in Boston records during this period.

1865 - Massachusetts State Census at Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts. [6]

Margaret Spellman, 46

W Michael Spellman, 19

Thomas Spellman, 14

Mary Spellman, 12

1870 - US Census at Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts.[7]

Ellen Diggiren, 26

Mary Counihan, 22

4

5 "United States Census, 1860", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MZC2-GZL: Mon Jul 08 10:12:10 UTC 2024), Entry for Margaret Spaulding and Thomas Spaulding, 1860.

6 "Massachusetts State Census, 1865", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MQHH-LV9: Wed Mar 06 17:38:23 UTC 2024), Entry for Margaret Spellman and W Michael Spellman, 1865.

7

Josephine Diggiren, 5

Patrick Diggiren, 3

Mary Diggiren

Mary Spellman, 52

Mary Spellman, 17

By 1880, Margaret and her children we

re living in Clinton, Iowa.

1880 - US Census at Clinton, Clinton, Iowa.[8]

Marg Spaulding, 65

Thomas Spaulding, 25

5 Dec 1893 - Death at Clinton, Clinton, Iowa.[9]

Dec 1893 - Obituary

Mrs. Margret Spaulding of Clinton died in that city the 5th inst., at the home of her son, Mr. Thos. H. Spaulding, with whom she resided after a week's illness with LaGrippe at the advanced age of 82 years.

She had been a resident of that city for many years and was well known and greatly esteemed; her noble and unselfish nature endearing her to all, and although her time could not have been much longer here on earth, many will note her demise with deep regret. She was a most zealous Catholic, her life being filled with the merits of Christian faith, piety, and benevolence, and

[8] "United States Census, 1880", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MD2Q-MRK: Fri Mar 08 16:55:58 UTC 2024), Entry for Marg Spaulding and Thomas Spaulding, 1880.

[9] "Iowa, County Death Records, 1880-1992", , *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVMN-VF45: Sun Jul 21 00:46:58 UTC 2024), Entry for Margaret Spaulding, 05 Dec 1893.

when, at last, the summons of her Easter came, she passed away as she had lived - in peace.

She leaves three children, Mrs. James Sheppard, Mrs. James Monroe, and Thomas H., all of Clinton, who are among that city's best known and most highly respected residents.

Her funeral was held at St. Mary's church, Very Rev. E.J. McLaughlin officiating at the Requiem High Mass. A large number of friends were in attendance and accompanied the remains to their last resting place in St. Mary's cemetery. The pallbearers were Jno. Colman, Thos. Murphy, Jon. Dalton, William Kerivan, Thomas Kerivan, Thomas Carey, and Edw. Kerivan. May her soul rest in peace.

Burial at St Mary's Cemetery at Clinton, Clinton, Iowa.[10]

[10] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVGK-3HMN: 10 June 2021), Margaret Mitchell Spaulding, ; Burial, Clinton, Clinton, Iowa, United States of America, Saint Mary's Cemetery; citing record ID 128207876, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.co